United Nations S/PV.7729

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7729th meeting
Thursday, 30 June 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Delattre	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Japan	Mr. Akahori
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. De la Calle García
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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16-20198 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mladenov.

Mr. Mladenov: Over the past decades, a broad consensus has been built around the understanding that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can be resolved only on the basis of a two-State solution. Palestinians and Israelis have accepted this vision. Countries of the region have also repeatedly endorsed this outcome. At the beginning of June, the Secretary-General and Ministers from some 30 countries gathered in Paris to discuss how to put forward incentives that could kick-start momentum towards that goal. The underlying message from Paris was clear — we must act decisively now or continue dealing with the damaging repercussions for years to come.

Despite all these efforts and despite the two-State vision remaining the professed goal of both sides, the conflict grinds on. Negative trends on the ground continue to jeopardize prospects for peace. Hope dwindles as the once formidable constituencies for peace erode on both sides. Extremists rise, seeking to set the agenda and shape reality. Radicalism feeds fear, mutual distrust breeds desperation, and ultimately all this fosters violence and terror.

Earlier this month, Israel was rocked by a brutal terror attack. On the evening of 8 June, two Palestinians opened fire in the heart of Tel Aviv, killing four Israelis and injuring nine others. Just a few hours ago, a 13 year-old Israeli girl was viciously stabbed to death by a Palestinian attacker who entered in her home in the West Bank. And on 21 June, a Palestinian teenager was shot and killed on a highway by the Israeli security forces.

If the first two events were clearly acts of terror and the second was referred to as "a mistake" that cut short an innocent life, all three incidents clearly illustrate the environment of fear in which Palestinians and Israelis alike have lived for generations. I unequivocally condemn all these tragic losses of life. Both tragedies, unfortunately, provide political fodder for cynical advocates of divisiveness, further undermining trust between the communities. I extend my sincere condolences to the families of the victims and call on the authorities to swiftly bring to justice those responsible for these acts.

Palestinian frustration cannot be wished away; it cannot be vanquished by aggressive security measures, arrests or punitive home demolitions. Neither is it helped when Israeli ministers openly reject the very notion of a Palestinian State or call for the complete annexation of Area C; but nor will the violence and terror fuelled by resentment bring about a Palestinian State. A peaceful future for both peoples cannot emerge on the back of statements that glorify terror and justify killing. Mutual respect cannot come as a result of stabbings, shootings and car-rammings.

Recognizing the urgent need to reverse this destructive dynamic, the Middle East Quartet has worked with the parties and key regional stakeholders to discuss how to preserve the two-State solution. Last September, the Quartet expressed its serious concern about the current trends on the ground and its strong support for significant steps that would help stabilize the situation, show meaningful progress towards a two-State reality, and restore belief among Palestinians and Israelis that negotiated peace remains feasible. In February, the Quartet noted the absence of such constructive steps and decided to prepare a report on the situation on the ground, including recommendations on the way forward. I am pleased to be able to brief the Security Council today on the conclusions of the report.

Let me begin by thanking President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu and their teams for their constructive engagement and contributions, without which the report would not have been possible. In completing our work by consensus, we in the Quartet have been guided by the belief that our role is to build bridges, to state the facts in an unbiased manner, and to engage constructively with the parties, the region and the broader international community in order to provide for a constructive way forward.

The report will not provide a complete review of the humanitarian, political, legal, and security aspects of the situation. It focuses on the major threats to achieving a negotiated peace and offers recommendations on the way forward. In it, the Quartet pledges its active support for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and reaffirms that a negotiated two-State outcome that meets Israeli security needs and Palestinian aspirations to statehood and sovereignty, ends the occupation that began in 1967, and resolves all permanent status issues is the only way to achieve enduring peace.

The Quartet believes, however, that important progress can be made now on the ground by each side independently demonstrating a sincere commitment to advancing the goal of two States. To that end, there is an urgent need for both sides to comply with their basic commitments under existing agreements and to take steps to prevent entrenching a one-State reality of perpetual occupation and conflict

Allow me to outline the three trends that the Quartet report has concluded severely undermine hope for peace. First are continuing violence and terrorism and the incitement that fuels them. Second is the continuing policy of settlement expansion and related policies in the West Bank. Third is the situation in Gaza and the lack of control over Gaza by the Palestinian Authority. Let me stress once again that these negative trends can and must be urgently reversed in order to advance the two-State solution on the ground.

The report will provide more detail on these trends and expand on the reasons why we in the Quartet are concerned about them. The main objective of the report is not to assign blame, but rather to provide a way forward to support the goal we all share of achieving a negotiated two-State solution. We hope to provide a constructive path that can help advance the two-State solution on the ground and create the conditions necessary for meaningful negotiations in the future.

The report contains recommendations to both sides, and specifically to the Palestinians and Israelis in relation to violence, incitement to violence, Israeli settlement construction and related policies, and Palestinian unity and institution-building. It reiterates its call from September of last year on Israel to implement positive and significant policy shifts, particularly in Area C, consistent with the idea of transitioning to greater Palestinian civil authority, as contemplated by prior agreements. As the Quartet said back then, progress in the areas of housing, water, energy, communications, agriculture and natural resources can be made while respecting Israel's legitimate security needs.

I hope that, on the basis of the report, the two parties will engage with the Quartet in order to constructively move the process forward. Once the full text of the report is published — which we hope will be tomorrow morning —I also encourage the Secuirty Council to welcome it and support the efforts of the Quartet.

In closing, let me once again emphasize the urgent need for the parties to engage in the implementation of the recommendations in the report. The Quartet has outlined a reasonable set of steps that, if implemented sincerely and resolutely with the support of the international community, could set Israelis and Palestinians firmly along a navigable course towards establishing a comprehensive peace, with historic implications for the entire region. But let me also be unequivocally clear that a permanent status agreement ending the conflict can be achieved only through direct bilateral negotiations, the outcome of which cannot be prejudged by unilateral steps.

As the Secretary-General said in Jerusalem two days ago,

> "No solution to the conflict will be possible without the recognition that both Palestinians and Jews have an undeniable historic and religious connection to this land. No solution can come through violence; it must be based on mutual respect and the recognition of the legitimate aspirations of both peoples. No solution can be imposed from the outside; it must be based on direct negotiations on the final status issues."

A peaceful future is what is at stake here. Taking bold steps to move beyond the empty platitudes, beyond the mutual accusations, and beyond the deeply entrenched lack of trust will require leadership and vision that have been starkly absent from this conflict for far too long. It is time for both sides to rise to the challenge. I can assure you, Mr. President, that the Secretary-General, including through his role in the Quartet, will continue unwaveringly to support Israelis and Palestinians in overcoming their divisions and achieving a just and lasting resolution to the conflict and the establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side with the State of Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Mladenov for his briefing.

Before inviting Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of June, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of France to the members of the Council, especially my colleagues the Permanent Representatives, their respective staffs and the secretariat of the Council for the very valuable support they have given to us.

It has been a very busy month, and one in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone, of course, or without the hard work, support and positive contribution of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat, as well as the relevant conference service officers. As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of Japan good luck in the month of July.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.